

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 SY-05 CU-04 OPR-02
/090 W

-----117683 221645Z /53

O P 221600Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8340
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH
AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE PRIORITY POUCH
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGUI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1796

LONDON FOR ASSISTANT SECTY MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS CG
SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT MAKES NUMEROUS ARRESTS IN CONNECTION
WITH POSSIBLE PLOT

1. SUMMARY: ZAIRIAN SECURITY FORCES APPARENTLY HAVE ARRESTED AT
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LEAST SIXTY PERSONS SINCE FEBRUARY 18, AND ARRESTS ARE
CONTINUING IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED PLOT AGAINST REGIME. BLAME
FOR PLOTTING REPORTEDLY IS BEING LAID ON ACTION MOVEMENT FOR
CONGOLESE RESURRECTION (MARC) WHOSE LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN LIVING IN
EXILE, PRIMARILY IN BELGIUM. ALTHOUGH CAMPAIGN OF ARRESTS AND NEWS
OF PLOT ATTEMPT ARE BEINGWIDELY DISCUSSED IN KINSHASA, ZAIRIAN
GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA HAVE MADE NO PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF EVENTS.

END SUMMARY

2. DURING WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 18-19, THERE WERE WIDESPREAD ARRESTS IN KINSHASA. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT EVENTS AND LOCAL PRESS HAS NOT MENTIONED SUBJECT, KNOWLEDGE OF ARRESTS IS COMMON. GENERALLY ACCEPTED EXPLANATION FOR ARRESTS IS THAT GOZ HAS THWARTED ANTI-REGIME PLOT. BELGIAN-BASED OPPOSITION GROUP, ACTION MOVEMENT FOR CONGOLESE RESURRECTION (MARC), REPORTEDLY WAS BEHIND PLOT.

3. ARRESTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN PUBLIC ATMOSPHERE OF CALM. AMONG FEW OVERT SIGNS OF TROUBLE WERE TEMPORARY INTERRUPTION OF RIVER TRAFFIC BETWEEN KINSHASA AND BRAZZAVILLE ON FEB. 18 AND 19. DURING WEEKEND, ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE SOMEWHAT MORE IN EVIDENCE THAN USUAL ON STREETS OF KINSHASA. WE HAVE REPORTS OF MINOR CIVIL DISORDER OCCURRING WHEN STUDENTS RESISTED MILITARY UNITS WHICH WENT TO NATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE (IPN) ON FEB. 18 TO MAKE ARRESTS.

4. WHILE ESTIMATES OF NUMBERS ARRESTED VARY, AT LEAST 60 REPORTEDLY ARE BEING HELD. AMONG THOSE TAKEN PRISONER WERE SOME 20 MILITARY OFFICERS. MANY MILITARY OFFICERS ARRESTED ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN IN ADMINISTRATIVE OR LOGISTICS FUNCTIONS RATHER THAN IN COMMAND STRUCTURE. AMONG CIVILIANS ARRESTED ARE REPORTEDLY SOME PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS FROM NATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE (IPN). MANY OF INDIVIDUALS IN CUSTODY
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ALLEGEDLY ARE OF SHABAN ORIGINS OR ARE BALUBA TRIBESMEN FROM KASAI. SOME OF INDIVIDUALS SAID TO BE IN CUSTODY ARE BRIG. GEN. BOPEYA (DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT), COL. MWEPU (DEPUTY CO OF THE GENDARMERIE), COL. KASSONGO (DEPUTY CO, LOGISTICS COMMAND), LT. COL. TSHILUKA (ASST TO THE CO OF THE GENDARMERIE FOR THE CITY OF KINSHASA), MAJ. KALONJI (DDN COMPUTER SECTION), MAJ. KALUME HAMBA (JAG OFFICE), MAJ. KAZADI (ARMOR ARTILLERY SCHOOL), AND FOLLOWING OFFICERS WHO ARE OTHERWISE UNIDENTIFIABLE: COL. MUTOMBO, LT. COL. KASSONGO, MAJ. TSHILUMBA, MAJ. KABEZA, AND LT. KITA. MANY OF THESE OFFICERS ARE SAID TO BE HELD IN THE OAU VILLAGE, A COMPLEX OF VIP HOUSING USUALLY RESERVED FOR OFFICIAL GUESTS OF GOZ. THIS MAY INDICATE THAT DETENTION AT LEAST FOR SOME, WILL BE ONLY TEMPORARY.

5. WHILE DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED COUP ATTEMPT REMAIN EXTREMELY SKETCHY, WE UNDERSTAND GOZ DISCOVERED A STORE OF EXPLOSIVES WHICH WERE TO BE USED BY THE PLOTTERS. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SOME ARMS WERE STOLEN FROM THE CAMP KOKOLO ARMORY ON FEBRUARY 16.

6. WIDELY ACCEPTED THEORY HERE IS THAT LEADER OF COUP ATTEMPT WAS DANIEL MONGUYA MBENGE. MONGUYA, AN OLD-LINE POLITICIAN AND CIVIL

SERVANT, WAS REMOVED FROM HIS POSITION AS GOVERNOR OF SHABA IN JULY OF 1972. AFTER BEING IMPRISONED BRIEFLY, HE WAS RELEASED FOR REASONS OF HEALTH. HE THEN EMIGRATED TO BELGIUM WHERE HE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE MARC OPPOSITION MOVEMENT AND HAS AUTHORED BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS ATTACKING THE MOBUTU REGIME. ON OCTOBER 18, 1977, THE GOZ CONDEMNED HIM TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA FOR TREASON.

7. COMMENT: WHILE MARC'S CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO MOBUTU REGIME HAS BEEN MATTER OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, WE HAVE NOT JUDGED THE MOVEMENT TO HAVE SUFFICIENT FOLLOWING TO MOUNT A SERIOUS THREAT TO REGIME. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS MAY DEMONSTRATE THAT MARC IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN WE HAD BELIEVED, BUT WE WOULD NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT MOBUTU IS USING THE OCCASION ALSO FOR A GENERAL
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CLAMP DOWN ON VARIETY OF ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED OPPOSITION ELEMENTS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PROCESS OF ARRESTS AND INTERROGRATIONS IS CONTINUING.
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